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The Fidelity Approach to the Teaching of Core English Language in Bompeh Senior High School: A Case Study

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Abstract

The study examines the approach used by teachers of Core English language to teach the core English language curriculum in Bompeh Senior High School, in the Western Region of Ghana. Specifically, the study focused on the academic qualifications teachers of the Core English language curriculum possessed, how topics were arranged in the syllabus, the method used by these teachers to teach, the teaching and learning materials they used during the teaching and learning process. A case study which employed both the quantitative and qualitative methods, enabled cross-validation of the data and ensured consistency and authentication.

The population was made up of one head teacher, one circuit supervisor, eight teachers (six females and two males) and 135 student-participants who were randomly selected. Data was collected through documentation, questionnaires, interviews and observation of classroom lessons. The outcome of the study revealed that majority of teachers was degree holders of English language. The results also revealed that the most prominent method for teaching English language was the lecture method, which was sometimes combined with demonstrations. The study concluded that the teachers have the skills, knowledge and competencies required to support the implementation of the core English Language curriculum. However, on-going in service training should be given to teachers in curriculum implementation so that they would be able to implement the curriculum effectively to reflect on ideas expressed in the developed curriculum.

Keywords: Fidelity approach, core English, teaching, teachers

1. Introduction

The history of formal education in Ghana can be traced to the arrival of the Europeans. Before their arrival in Gold Coast, now, Ghana, people were educated at the family level. According to McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975), one of the major purposes of such family education was the inculcation of good character and good health in the young growing members of the community. The other was to equip them with adequate knowledge of their history, beliefs and culture, thus enabling them to participate fully in the social life in the community. During this period, education was purely informal and this type of education for that matter, was passed on from one generation to another along family lines. Hence, at that time, the home served as a school, with the parents and elders being the teachers.

When the European missionaries, merchants, and administrators arrived in Ghana, they realised that there was the need to train people to manage the affairs of the new society that was evolving. So they established local schools in order to train people. Before the introduction of the local school system, the need to introduce general education by then was triggered by the need for the colonial masters to educate the mulattos, the children they fathered with the local women. According to McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975), this system was called "Mulatto Education".

The European merchants established castle schools and English language was one of the subjects taught, because it was the language that was used in communicating with the natives (Antwi, 1992). As years passed by, the needs of the Ghanaian society became more complex, necessitating the need to expand the educational facilities in the country. This led to the establishment of the pioneer secondary schools in Ghana, among which are: Mfantshipim school (1876), Adisadel College (1910), Achimota school (1927), Saint Augustine College (1930).

After Ghana gained independence in 1957, English language became the official language of the country. English Language still serves as the language of government, education, commerce, and to some extent, social interactions, especially among the educated elite. English Language enjoys a wider geographical spread than any of the indigenous languages in Ghana today. English language is therefore the "lingua franca", that is the common language used by people from different ethnic backgrounds to communicate (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

Active and effective participation in any given society is said to be based on one's ability to speak, listen, view, read, and write with fluency, confidence, purpose, and with enjoyment in a wide range of contexts. Communication is,

therefore, seen as the life blood of the school curriculum. The study of English Language encompasses a student's ability to use English language appropriately and effectively, as well as one's ability to use English language as a means of learning in other areas of the curriculum. Language is vital to achieving many of our goals and careers. Thus it is a source of artistic satisfaction or simple pleasure (Cook, 1991). Students need to understand English Language to develop the competence and confidence needed to meet the demands of school, employment, and further education. The world has become a global village; hence, an English

Language curriculum is imperative for all societies.

After independence, the existing curriculum in Ghana was changed because the economic needs of the country were not being met. From 1960/61 to 1974/75 as many as nine committees were set up, one after the other, to conduct comprehensive reviews of the educational system in the country. Committees such as: The Botsio Committee of 1960-61, the Amisshah Committee of 1963, the Kwapong Committee of 1966-67, the Cockerott Committee of 1966, the Busia Committee of 1967, the Russel Committee of 1969, the Dowuona Committee of 1970, the Dzobo Committee 1972 and the Evans Anfom Committee of 1974-75. The Anamuah – Mensah Committee of 2002 was also established at a point in time, to make recommendations that would improve education. Each of these committees came out with useful suggestions on how education should be related

to the socio-economic needs of the country.

It was realized by the Dzobo committee of 1974 that the educational system of Ghana was not able to provide the requisite labour force suitable for the Ghanaian job market. Thus, to make education more relevant to the Ghanaian society, vocational and technical courses were introduced into the educational system as part of the reform. This called for the implementation of the Junior Secondary School (JSS) system on experimental basis. This system also helped with the introduction of practical subjects and activities into the educational system, allowing students to acquire occupational skills which after apprenticeship could lead to self-employment.

The educational reform which was implemented in 1987 called for the number of years spent in pre-tertiary education to be reduced. This resulted in a 9-year basic education consisting of a 6-year primary school and a 3-year Junior Secondary School (JSS) now Junior High School (JHS). Junior Secondary School students were required to write a Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), in order to gain admission into a 3-year Senior Secondary School (SSS) now Senior High School (SHS). By the new educational structure, the duration of pre-tertiary education was reduced from 17 years to 12 years, phasing out the Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination which was written at the end of the middle school education. The General Certificate of Education: Ordinary levels and Advanced levels (G. C. E. 'O' and 'A' levels) examinations, by which students gained admission to tertiary institutions was changed during this reform. This time, admission into tertiary institutions became dependent on students' performance in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE)

now West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

As part of one such reform, English was introduced as a subject to be taught in the basic schools while the medium of instruction was the prominent and accepted local language used within that locality, and the medium of instruction from the fourth year through the secondary and tertiary levels of education was English language. Notwithstanding the numerous changes, innovations and reviews made to the educational curriculum in general and specifically to the English Language curriculum, results from W.A.E.C. showed that the performance of students in English Language was not good enough.

Curriculum, content and methods for teaching a subject are very important. According to Frede (1998), curricula are influenced by many factors, including society's values, content standards, research findings, community expectations, culture, language and quality of teachers. Although these factors differ per country, state, region and even programme, high-quality well implemented English Language curricula provide developmentally appropriate support and cognitive challenges that can lead to positive outcomes. Bertrand (2007) argued that there is growing consensus on the importance of an explicit curriculum with clear purpose, goals and approaches for zero-to-school-age children. In the view of Litjens and Taguma (2010), curriculum is a complex concept containing multiple components, such as goals, content and pedagogical practices.

It is argued that the best designed programme in education will fail to have the intended impact and results if it is not properly implemented. This means that the degree of implementation of a particular programme will determine the successes or otherwise of the programme outcomes (Ruiz-Primo, 2006). Fullan and Stiegelbauer (2000) are of the view that achieving effective curriculum implementation is a complex process. According to them, "implementation consists of the process of putting into practice an idea, programme, or set of activities and situations new to the people attempting or expected to change"

(p.65). They further stated that the existence and persistence of people-related problems and challenges in educational change is the single most essential factor that determines the achievement of desired educational objectives.

Moreover, it is observed that successful implementation of a new educational programme depends on such key variables and these variables as the characteristics of the educational change, local characteristics and external factors. Erden (2010) conducted a study and elaborated in the findings of the study that curriculum change alone is not adequate enough for the provision of high quality education. Rather, there is a need for good implementers of the curriculum in order to make it a successful one.

Erden (2010) also opines that since teachers are the principal agents who translate all the theoretical educational information in the curriculum into real classroom practices, there is therefore the need to get trained and qualified teachers to implement the curriculum in every community. In line with this, Park, cited in Erden (2010), indicates that

teachers' understanding of the curricula is crucial for apt adaptation and implementation. This is because if teachers are able to figure out what the curriculum's philosophy and theoretical framework is in details, they will be able to successfully implement such a new curriculum.

According to Slater (1986), the selection of teaching methods and strategies for the effective and successful implementation of a particular curriculum is also important as the selection of the content in itself. Vespoor (quoted in Rogan & Grayson, 2003) points out that "when training courses fail to take teachers' level of knowledge into account, implementation of the reform will be hampered" (p.1179).

According to the Chief Examiner's Report on students' performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination [WASSCE], most students find it difficult to understand basic concepts in English (WAEC, 2008). This is clearly manifested in their poor performance at the examination. The fact remains that it is not enough to develop a new curriculum for schools to implement when such schools do not have the needed expertise and materials to support the implementation process. It is stated that how a change is put into practice determines to a large extent how well the new programme will succeed (Fullan, 1991).

On the implementation and continuation of new reforms, Fullan (1991) again maintains that most attempts at educational reforms do not succeed, not only because of inadequate materials, ineffective in-service training or minimal administrative support but, educational change can also fail partly due to the poor assumption of planners and partly due to some problems that are inherently solvable. This means that the success story of every curriculum implementation is a function of multiple factors. Unless these factors are collectively resolute, the implementation process will never materialize. This explains why Rogan and Grayson (2003) assert that many visionary and educationally sound ideas and policy documents are much slower and more difficult to be implemented than usually anticipated.

It is against this backdrop that this research needs to be carried out to help find out whether teachers teaching Core English Language in Bompeh Senior High Technical School in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, are implementing the Core English syllabus for Senior High Schools, using the fidelity approach to curriculum implementation.

1.1. Problem Statement

Although English Language has been with the Ghanaian society and culture from the colonial times, there seems to be challenges in the teaching of the subject. The educational reform of 1987 brought into existence the J.S.S. and the S.S.S. systems. This reform brought in its wake, new ways and improved methods of teaching subjects like English Language, even at the senior secondary school level. Records from West African Examination Council (W.A.E.C.) over the past few years have shown that the W.A.S.S.C.E results in Core English Language in Bompeh Senior High Technical School have not been the best.

In 2006, the number of students who wrote the W.A.S.S.C.E. was 289 and the percentage of students who passed the Core English Language paper was 15.5% with 84.5% failing. In the year 2007, the percentage of students who passed the Core English Language paper was 22.1%, with 78.9% failing. In 2008, the percentage of students who passed the Core English Language paper was 17.2%, with 82.2% failing. In 2009, the total number of students who sat for the examination was 364, with 189 (13.5%) obtaining a pass and 175 (86.5%) failing.

In 2010, there were no WASSCE Examinations. The high percentage of results that were low reflects the poor performance in Bompeh Senior High Technical School. What could, therefore, be the reasons for this? The most common factors that affect students' performance are the family, teacher, school environment, and personal profile of the students (Diaz, 2003; Hijaz & Naqvi, 2006). This study examined the teacher factor. It will, therefore, be worthwhile to find answers to questions in relation to how the teacher implements the curriculum and its effects on students' performance.

1.2. Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following research questions

- What academic qualifications do teachers of English Language possess in Bompeh Senior High Technical School?
- How are topics arranged in the syllabus for teaching English Language?
- Which teaching methods do teachers of Bompeh Senior High Technical School use during teaching and learning of Core English?
- What specific teaching and learning materials do teachers have access to for the implementation of the curriculum for Core English?

2. Methodology

2.1. Case Study

The research design that was used for the study was case study. Yin (2003) identifies case study research to be the best strategy if the research questions are explanatory, when the research is on contemporary issue and when behavioural events within the research environment occurs within a real world context and outside the control of the researcher. According to Ofori and Dampson (2011, p.34) "a case study is an in -depth analysis conducted, usually over a limited period of time, and focusing upon a number of subjects".

2.2. Population

Best and Khan (1995) have expressed the view that the primary purpose of a research is to discover principles that have universal application but to study a whole population to arrive at generalization would be impracticable, if not impossible" (p. 10). This informed the researcher to use a representative sample of the population for the study. Two sampling methods were used for the selection: a simple random and purposive sampling. A simple random sampling technique was used to sample the students' respondents. Simple random sampling is a method of selecting samples such that all members of the various groups stand equal opportunity of being chosen. Out of the target population of 135 students, a representative sample of 100 was selected for the study, using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination formula. In all, a sample size of 100 students was chosen for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select one Head teacher, one Circuit Supervisor, and 8 Core English Language teachers for the study. This gives the total sample size of 110.

2.3. Questionnaire, interview Guide and Observation

The main sources of data for the study were primary and secondary sources. With regard to the primary data, we used questionnaire, interview guide and observation guide to collect data from respondents. For the secondary data, relevant documents, lesson notes, schemes of work, books, journals, internet search, and libraries were depended on for more detailed information. The secondary data provided me with more information on the issue under study. Questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the students. The questionnaire was used because the respondents were literate and could read and respond to the questions. A questionnaire comprises a number of questions or statements that relate to the purpose of a study. It is a data-gathering instrument through which respondents are made to answer questions or respond to a given statement in writing (Best & Kahn, 1995). This method would give the necessary information that the researchers needed from the respondents.

Also, an interview guide was used to assist in collect qualitative data from the head teacher and the circuit supervisor. The interview guide was also necessary because the respondents might be busy and would not have time to read and respond to the items. Again, it gave me the chance to read, interpret and redirect questions to solicit more information. Interview allowed the researcher to probe further issues which were not clear.

Data were also gathered by observing English lessons. This was done for the purpose of cross-checking views expressed on the questionnaire and interview. It was to find out the situation on the ground with respect to the teaching and learning of Core English language. The 8 teachers selected for the observation exercise were used for the study. Each teacher was observed twice in a double period lesson of eighty (80) minutes each. The teachers were rated on a four-point scale, indicating the extent to which they demonstrated the competencies outlined in the observation guide. All observations were done by the researchers.

2.4. Data Collection

The researchers obtained a letter of introduction from the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, the University of Cape Coast in order to secure trust from the respondents. In order to get respondents to respond to the instrument on time, the researchers made an initial contact explaining the objective of the study and soliciting the respondents' cooperation. The researchers explained to them the rationale and purpose of the study and appealed to them to participate in the study. The researchers took time to explain the items to the respondents to enhance the validity of the data. A number of follow ups were made to ascertain whether the respondents had completed the questionnaires. The visits were necessary because they provided opportunity for further explanations to respondents who had some difficulties. All the questionnaires were retrieved within one week representing 100 (100%).

2.5. Data Analysis

The raw data collected from the respondents were processed by coding them and were later analysed using Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS version 23) and the results presented in frequencies and percentages. The analysis of the results helped to determine the direction of the responses. The analysis of the qualitative data collected from the interview and observation, helped the researchers to gain comprehensive understanding and analytical descriptions of statements made by respondents. The written and recorded data were transcribed and put into various themes for easy analysis. Narrative notes were used to analyse patterns in the observations and the interviews undertaken. These helped to identify patterns that were similar. These were then categorized into themes and classified. Care was taken to identify points where there was convergence and divergence of themes during the coding and classifying. The data were carefully analysed and presented in relation to the research objectives and research questions. The results were interpreted and validated to match the findings of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

The results were discussed in relation to the research questions as well as the literature review. The descriptive design was employed in this study. Frequencies and percentages and narratives were used in presenting the results.

Gender	English No.	Teachers %	Students No.	%
Male	2	25.0	70	70.0
Female	6	75.0	30	30.0
Total	8	100	100	100

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

From Table 2, out of the total number of 8 teacher respondents 6 (75.0%) were female, whereas 2 (25.0%) were males. This indicates that there were more females' teachers in Bompeh Senior High Technical School. On the part of the student respondents, 70 (70.0%) were males and 30 (30.0%) were females. From the result, males represented the majority.

Years	No	%
1 – 4 years	2	25
5 – 9 years	4	50
10 and above	2	25
Total	8	100

Table 2: Teaching Experience of Teachers

As can be seen from Table 2, it is realised that the majority of the teacher- respondents 6 (75%) have taught for over 5 years. It can, therefore, be concluded that most of the teachers have enough experience in the teaching of the English Language.

3.1. Academic Qualification Teachers of English Language Possess in Teaching of the Subject

It is widely accepted that the quality of any school cannot be higher than the quality of teachers in the school and that the quality of teachers in the schools is also dependent upon high quality teacher education and professional development opportunities in every country. Thus, teachers who are well prepared in traditional teacher education training programmes and continuous in - service education help ensure increased levels of student achievement which is one of the indicators of successful curriculum implementation in every country. Effective teachers should, therefore, have high level of knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, and commitment necessary for teaching and implementation of any educational programme. Such teachers should know the subjects they teach and have the necessary professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills in the teaching and learning process. Effective teachers therefore must master pedagogical knowledge used to convey subject matter to students.

The results showed that the majority of the respondents, 4 (50.0%) were first degree holders and professional teachers, 2 (25.0%) were Bachelor of Arts degree holders with no qualification in education. Master of Education degree holders were made up of 2 (25%) as presented in table 3.

Years	No	%
B.Ed.	4	50
B.A	2	25
M.Phil.	0	0
M.Ed.	2	25
Total	8	100.0

Table 3: Academic Qualification of Teachers

Table 3 shows that the majority of the teachers in Bompeh Senior High Technical School in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis possess the professional qualifications required for the effective teaching of Core English Language. One can, therefore, say that the teachers have the requisite skills, knowledge and competencies that are desirable to support the implementation of the core English Language curriculum.

Rogan and Grayson's (2003) findings support the finding that a critical factor that can support or hinder the implementation of new ideas and practices in a school pertains to the teacher's own background, training, qualification and level of confidence, and their commitment to teaching. This finding was again supported by Kwarteng (2009) in a study he conducted in the Ashanti and Central Regions of Ghana, on the status of accounting curriculum implementation using; A concerns – Based Adoption Model assessment in Ashanti and Central Regions. A study conducted by Rowan, Chiang and Miller (1997) found that high school students taught by teachers with an academic major in their assigned subject areas had higher student achievement in the subject than students taught by teachers without a major in the subject area.

From the findings of this study and the literature supporting the findings, it can be concluded that the teachers in Bompeh Senior High Technical School in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis possessed the professional qualification required for effective teaching of Core English Language.

The study was further interested in finding from respondents the effects of academic qualification of teachers on curriculum implementation. This was necessary because the involvement of the teacher in the curriculum implementation process is paramount in every educational system. It is in consonance with this that Wilkins (as cited in Okra, 2002) stated

that the degree of professional training that a teacher acquires determines his or her success or failure in putting a particular instructional programme into operation. Respondents in this study were, therefore, asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that the qualification of a teacher can affect curriculum implementation.

Academic Qualification of Teachers	Teachers				Students			
	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	SA %	A %	D %	SD %
English teachers with a major in English are able to teach better than teachers without a major	50	25	25	0	50	30	20	0
Students' achievement in English is directly related to their teachers' competence in teaching	50	50	0	0	50	40	10	0
Students taught by trained teachers have higher level of understanding than those taught by non-trained teachers	25	50	25	0	60	40	0	0

Table 4: Effects of Academic Qualification of Teachers on Curriculum Implementation

From the results in Table 4, it can be deduced that the majority of teachers and students agreed that the academic qualification of teachers is very important in the curriculum implementation process and is related to students' academic performance. This is because over 50% of responses in all the items indicated that teachers' academic qualification, competency, subject area of specialization is related to curriculum implementation and students' academic performance. From the results in Table 4, one can say that there is consensus among the teachers and the students about the importance of the academic qualification of teachers.

The findings here agreed with Wheeler (1967) that the teacher is the cog in the wheel of curriculum implementation. Thus, it calls for high teacher competencies to achieve successful implementation of the programme. It is also believed that, an effective teacher is the one who consistently achieves goals, which either directly or indirectly focuses on the learning of his students. There is therefore the need, to equip teachers so as to be able to implement new ideas.

Thus, there must be on-going in-service training for teachers on the field when these changes are to be implemented. Kwarteng's (2009) finding about teachers' qualification and its impact on curriculum implementation supports this finding when he posits that the level of training or qualification attained by teachers may have an impact in their bid to adopt and use an innovation as desired. He further maintains that teachers who possess higher academic qualification are motivated to successfully and easily adopt and implement an innovation.

The study was equally interested in finding out teacher's command of the subject matter, teacher's knowledge of the pedagogical skills, and the delivery of curriculum content and its effects on curriculum implementation. From the observation, it was revealed that the majority of teachers had the required professional qualification necessary to be able to teach effectively and deliver the curriculum content as expected.

Nonetheless, it was observed that even though some of the teachers had the requisite professional qualification; they did not have command over the subject matter. This was so because some of them were not English Language subject major. Ingersoll (1999) supported the idea that teachers must not only have professional qualification but knowledge in the subject matter to be able to teach effectively. He, therefore, indicated that "teachers assigned to teach a subject for which they have little background are probably more likely to overly rely on textbooks, and the kinds of learning obtained from textbooks are probably what standardized examinations best capture" (pp. 26-27).

Similarly, the result is consistent with that of Ross, Cousins, and Gadalla (1999) who found that teacher efficacy was lower for teachers who were teaching courses out-of-field. This indicates that the effectiveness of the teaching-learning method is highly dependent upon the level of training that teachers attain in a particular subject area. Where teachers are more effective as a results of the professional training that they undergo, the teaching-learning process also tends to be effective.

Relating this observation further to the literature, it confirmed what Rogan and Grayson (2003) found as an impediment to curriculum implementation. In their study, they concluded that a critical factor that can support or hinder the implementation of new ideas and practices in a school pertains to the teachers' own background, training and level of confidence, and their commitment to teaching. They also identified lack of subject matter knowledge by teachers as one major problem associated with curriculum implementation. They stated that teachers who are under-qualified or have minimum qualifications produce learners who are less proficient in the subject matter.

Similarly, Gregg (2001) and Gross et al. (as cited in Okra, 2002) found that beginning teachers have problems with lesson content because they lacked sufficient knowledge about the content and that inaccurate information was either presented or allowed to stand unchallenged in the lessons. These researchers argued that lack of skills and knowledge on the part of teachers impedes the implementation process since such teachers will not be able to conform to the demands of the programmes. Gregg (2001) concluded that such lessons lacked coherence, because the beginning teachers tended to make passing references to concepts. This was seen in the classroom observation.

Academic Qualification of Teachers	Teachers				Students			
	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	SA %	A %	D %	SD %
The syllabus is poorly planned and organized	40	30	20	10	50	30	10	10
The syllabus is too overloaded to be completed on time	50	50	20	0	50	50	0	0
Some Topics in the English curriculum is difficult to understand	25	50	25	0	60	40	0	0
Lack of alignment between English curriculum and requirements of examination bodies	20	40	20	20	30	40	20	10

Table 5: How Topics Are Arranged in the Syllabus for Teaching English Language

From the results in Table 5, it can be deduced that the way the topics have been arranged in the syllabus does not support the effective implementation of the core English Language curriculum. For instance, the syllabus was to be used during the students' three or four year stay in school. The academic year is supposed to begin in September every year. Unfortunately, most of the first years enter the Senior High schools when the first term has almost ended and some come as late as the second and third terms. So, some topics ended up not being covered at all before these students write their final exams. The study revealed that all the teachers 8 (100%) and all the students 100 (100%) agreed to the statement that the syllabus was overloaded and this made it difficult for teachers to complete the syllabus.

Concerning certain topics in the English curriculum being difficult to understand, the study showed that all the students 100 (100%) and 6 (75%) of the teacher respondents agreed to the statement. The same trend of high response could be observed from the remaining responses. Thus, the findings of the study clearly indicated that the syllabus for core English Language has been poorly planned and organized, the syllabus was too overloaded to be completed on time, some of the content of the English

curriculum was complex, and lack of alignment between English curriculum and requirements of examination bodies in Ghana militate against effective implementation of the English language curriculum.

This confirms Amuseghan's (2007) that a lot of textbooks in use in our schools are poorly organized. This makes them unsuitable for learners to use. Amuseghan (2007) further indicated that most of the textbooks at present are inadequate or expensive to acquire. Amuseghan (2007), was the opinion that every new curricula calls for appropriate textbooks and reference books in order to be implemented. Otherwise, in the classroom situations, teachers and learners sometime find it difficult to comprehend the content of such curricular materials. In spite of the centrality of textbooks in the teaching and learning activities, Johnson, cited in Amuseghan (2007) asserts that teachers should not enslave themselves to particular textbooks or a set of materials alone. He further posits that teachers must understand and use the freedom that they have to adapt and to supplement the materials to conform to the needs and interests of the learners.

These findings are also in collaboration with the findings of Shower (2003), who indicated that the fidelity approach leads teachers to become curriculum-transmitters who use the student's book as the only source of instructional content. According to Shower (2003), teachers transmit textbook content as its structure dictates by means of linear unit-by-unit, lesson-by-lesson and page-by-page strategies. Neither do they use 'adaptation' strategies to adjust curriculum to their context; nor do they employ 'skipping' strategies to eliminate irrelevant studying units in the syllabus, lessons or tasks. Moreover, these teachers in his view rarely supplement the missing elements in the curriculum and focus solely on covering content without responding to classroom dynamics.

Obanya (2002) supported this assertion and concluded that, in ideal situations there would be a perfect match between what is prescribed, what is practiced, and consequently what is achieved. This mean that, since the overall objective of all senior high schools in the country is to achieve a high level of fidelity in implementing the curriculum and its instructional practices, there is the need for teachers to use the syllabus the way it was meant to be used.

Methods of teaching	Teachers			Students		
	Always %	Sometimes %	Never %	Always %	Sometimes %	Never %
Lecture method	70	30	0	80	10	10
Discussion method	50	40	10	40	40	20
Demonstration method	40	40	20	30	20	50
Debates	20	30	50	20	20	60
Field trip method	10	20	70	10	10	80
Combination of methods	70	20	10	80	20	0

Table 6: Methods of Teaching

The statistics from Table 6 revealed that the majority of the teachers (70%) agreed that they always used lecture method in teaching, and (30%) of the teachers said sometimes. Also, (80%) of the students said their teachers always used lecture method and combination of the methods in teaching. Concerning the use of field trip in teaching, 80% of the students and 70% of the teachers responded that teachers never used field trip in teaching. On the issue of the use of demonstration method to teach, 50% of the students said their teachers never used it and 40% of the teachers responded that they always used it, but 40% of the teachers said they sometimes used it. The observation established that English teachers in Bompeh Senior High Technical School, indeed used lecture method a lot during teaching. When they entered a

class, they would begin by talking and would spend almost the whole time talking. Students were only questioned when it was some minutes to the end of the lesson.

Discussion, demonstration, debates, field trips methods were not as regularly used as the questionnaire responses indicated. Also, teachers did not demonstrate that they could use those methods competently. For instance, a teacher who wanted to use debate did not group the students in the class, give the students ample time to go and research on the topic to be used for the debate but as she was teaching, gave the students the topic and asked for any student to get up and speak either for or against the motion. Another instance was seen when teachers after using the combination method involving lecture method and question and answering method, failed to ask questions to check if students had understood the lessons, giving the excuse that the bell had announced the end of the lesson. The lecture method which dominated all lessons observed made most of the English lessons were dull. The use of the lecture method made lessons that were observed, mostly teacher-centred.

The findings indicate that most of the recommended methods for teaching English language were not used during lessons. Some of the recommended methods for teaching English language include discussion, debates, dramatization/role play, lecture, question and answer, field trip, demonstration, etc. The findings of this research, however, showed the unpopularity of some of the methods like debates, role play, discussions and field trips among teachers. This is not encouraging because of the numerous advantages associated with these methods in teaching a subject like English language. For instance, the use of role play and dramatization in teaching helps the students to develop the ability to speak in public. It is, therefore, unfortunate that such methods are not used by some English teachers.

Relating this to the literature, Bishop (1985) posits that, "a curriculum is enriched by the creativity and imagination of the best teacher..." (p.190). He adds that teachers are the heart of the entire curriculum process, and the change process cannot proceed without the full co-operation and involvement of such teachers. This implies that an unqualified and an untrained teaching force cannot affect the implementation process since education depends on the quality and mental health of the people who are recruited to the teaching service (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 2000).

	Teachers		Students	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes(%)	No (%)
Does your school/department have the teaching and learning materials for core English				
English textbooks	70	30	50	50
Teacher's handbook	80	20	60	40
Visual materials	30	70	20	80
Audio materials	40	60	40	60
Audio – visual materials	30	70	20	80

Table 7: Teaching and Learning Materials for the Implementation of the Curriculum for Core English

From the study, it was revealed from Table 8 that 70% of the teacher respondent and 50% of the student-respondents believed that there were English textbooks for the teaching and learning of Core English. However, 30% of the teachers and 20% of the students believed that they did not have visual aids such as pictures, chart, etc., to aid in the implementation of the curriculum. Also, the study showed that 30% of the teacher-respondents and 20% of the student-respondents agreed that there were no audio-visual aids to help in the teaching of core English language in Bompeh Senior High School.

This result supports the view of Ely (1990) that an innovation without the necessary resources, such as money, tools and materials, to support its implementation, will not be successful. This means that if new or substantial resources are required, they need to be readily accessible for the new programme to be implemented. This corroborates the finding of Okra (2008) when he revealed that the unavailability of curriculum materials such as recommended textbooks, syllabuses and teachers' handbooks tend to lower the faithful implementation of instructional programmes.

In similar vein, Gresham (1989) observed that programmes that require additional materials and resources for effective implementation are likely to be implemented with poorer fidelity than it has been planned. The finding is consistent with that of Fullan et al. (1991) who found in their study that inadequacy of instructional materials or resources to fully support the implementation of an initiative has caused most task and reform-oriented teachers to fail in their attempts. They stated that where there is pressure to do things better; support must also be readily available. Otherwise, the implementation process will suffer a setback or defeat.

The findings of Davis (2003) study support this when he concluded by indicating that schools without access to computers limited the students' use of information and communication technology system which can enhance the learning and understanding of issues. Zevin (2000) also supports Davis' findings by stating that teachers depend on the textbooks as their main source of ideas without much enrichment or supplementation from other forms of curricular materials such as reading journals and supplementary readers, using the internet to do more research on topics to be taught, and many more.

Similarly, Grossman and Thompson (2004) agreed with this when they found that the curriculum materials did, indeed, powerfully shape teachers' ideas about teaching language arts as well as their ideas about classroom practice. The study also found that teachers are the avid consumers of curriculum materials. The curriculum materials they use for teaching seem to have a profound effect on how such teachers thought about and taught the subject matter (Grossman &

Thompson, 2004) According to these researchers, materials offer teachers and students the opportunity to grasp subject matter knowledge as well as offer teachers many opportunities to acquire pedagogical content knowledge.

The result is in line with findings of Lewy (1991) who is of the opinion that the fidelity approach has the "advantage of being more clear, more specific, and easier to assess" (p.379). However, Kovaleski, Gickling and Marrow (1999) disagree with Lewy by indicating that the initial process of ensuring fidelity of programme implementation will be fairly resource intensive since the implementation process will continue to require more resources as schools receive new staff and students. They also point out that when schools adopt new initiatives without the necessary support for faithful implementation of the programme being designed, the results of the programme are often poor. It is therefore possible that there might be certain practical challenges associated with achieving high level of fidelity of implementation in the senior high schools when the resources available for teachers to implement the curriculum are inadequate.

In a centralized educational system like that of Ghana where general directions, policy framework and formulations concerning education are programmed by a central body to be implemented at the grass-root level, the schools seem to be burdened by these numerous policy initiatives. In a similar vein, the English Language curriculum has been centrally designed and it is supposed to be homogeneously implemented at all school levels in the country.

However, the aims and objectives of this educational programme cannot be realized if teachers do not use appropriate methods and strategies in teaching. In order to solve this problem, there is the need for the fidelity approach to be used in order to assess the practices which actually prevail at the school level where curricular decisions are put into open use. Moreover, since the overall objective of all senior high schools in the country is to achieve a high level of fidelity in implementing the curriculum and its instructional practices, the use of this approach as the theoretical framework will help to find out the success or the otherwise of the implementation process.

3.2. Adequacy of Teaching and Learning Materials used for Teaching

The research also sought to find out about the adequacy of the material that respondents said were available for the implementation of the core English language curriculum in Bompeh Senior High Technical School. The results are shown in table 8. With respect to the adequacy of the English textbooks, 50% of the teachers said that the textbooks were enough for teaching and learning however, 30% of the students disagreed to the statement. Concerning visual, audio and audio-visual aids, the teachers and the students all agreed that they were inadequate. From Table 8, it is obvious that teachers only use the English textbooks and syllabus to the neglect of the other resources. This means that the other teaching learning materials were either occasionally used or were not used at all.

The observation guide was used to find out the appropriate use and the adequacy of these teaching learning materials during English lessons. The observation established that indeed, textbooks dominated English lessons.

	Teachers		Students	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Does your school/department have adequate teaching and learning materials for core English				
English textbooks	60	40	50	50
Teacher's handbook	80	20	60	40
Visual materials	30	70	20	80
Audio materials	40	60	40	60
Audio – visual materials	30	70	20	80

Table 8: Adequacy of Teaching and Learning Materials Used for Teaching

The questionnaire and the observation data showed that with the exception of the English textbooks, all the other instructional resources are not used by teachers and students during lesson delivery. Such a situation may be due to the non-availability of instructional resources in the schools. It can also be due to the inadequate time allocation allotted to English lessons.

This confirms the findings of Amoah (1998) and Swanzy (2007) who identified that the inadequacy as well as non-availability of educational resources such as qualified teachers, finance, teaching and learning resources, tools and equipment makes the implementation of educational programmes to be difficult. These researchers further indicated that the successful implementation of any educational programme depends on the supply of the necessary resources and capabilities. Kormos (as cited in Anderson, 2002) also states that lack of quality and usable classroom materials is a frequent problem in dealing with the implementation of instructional programmes.

In this case, the inadequacy of the teaching and learning resources as noticed from the findings of this study, imply that the curriculum implementation process is going to be challenged. Since the resources were available but, inadequate, getting access to and the effective use of the resources will pose a problem in the curriculum implementation process. It was also realized that the inadequacy of the teaching learning materials posed a great problem to the teachers and the students' ability to understand what is being taught. Both teachers and students confirmed that the inadequacy of the materials led to low level of understanding and retention especially in the English Language lessons.

3.3. Effectiveness of Classroom Activities, Availability and Quality of Curriculum Materials

The researchers made observation on the effectiveness of classroom activities, availability and quality of curriculum materials in Bompeh Senior High Technical School in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. It was realized from

the observation that the availability and quality of curriculum materials in the school for the teaching and learning of English Language was inadequate. The recommended curriculum materials in the syllabus for the effective teaching of English language include textbooks, teacher's handbook, visual aids such as charts and pictures, newspapers, audio-visual aids such as films and television sets, audio aids such as tapes and CDs. Though it was observed that some of the curriculum materials such as textbooks, tape, CDs were available, the quality and adequacy of these materials were an issue of concern. Concerning the use of teaching-learning resources, it was observed that the majority of the teachers taught English Language lesson without teaching and learning resources. Some of these materials were also found to be in poor state. When the teachers were questioned about this, they said some of the other teachers were using the teaching and learning resources and some were not even available for them to use. An instance could be sighted, when most of the SHS 2s had lessons in comprehension at the same time. The English textbooks available were 40 pieces. Due to the inadequacies of the textbooks, the other classes that also had lessons in comprehension, had their passages written on the board by their teachers. This made the teachers waste so much time. According to the teachers, the cost involved in providing those teaching and learning resources was expensive for that matter they could not provide the resources themselves to facilitate teaching and learning.

It can be concluded from the questionnaire, interview and observation data that curriculum materials needed for the teaching and learning of English language are not available in Bompeh Senior High School. This situation can be attributed to the high number of students in the school using the few available curriculum materials. The results of this observation confirmed the findings of Fullan et al. (1991) assertion that inadequacy of instructional materials or resources to fully support the implementation of an initiative has caused most task and reform oriented teachers to fail in their attempts to implement the reforms. They stated further in their findings that where there is pressure to do things better; support must also be readily available; otherwise, the implementation process will suffer a setback and defeat at the end. Fullan et al., (2000) also supported this when they opined that financial allocations are necessary but most developing countries are unable to meet the demand for these material and financial resources. This therefore breaks the implementation of well-designed educational programmes leading to failure.

Again, the quality of the teaching-learning process was observed. It was realized from the observation that the teaching-learning process was not very conducive to promote learning. This was due to the fact that the teachers were using mostly the lecture method to teaching, so the teaching – learning atmosphere was more teacher-centered than child-centered. Students were not given the opportunity to explore, analyse and find things out for themselves. Students' were often, quiet during lessons; they did not ask questions, neither did they contribute to the lesson. Students' were unable to solve examples teacher wrote on the board. Students learn by doing. Therefore, from the data collected from classroom observation, it could be deduced that learning did not take place. This was because students became passive listeners as teaching was on going instead of becoming active listeners which could have helped in giving their feedback to the teachers for re teaching and re emphasis on concepts and topics that are a bit difficulty and lacks clarity.

4. Conclusions

Conclusions drawn from the main findings are that: Since most of the respondents had obtained professional qualification, it can be concluded that the majority of the teachers in Bompeh Senior High Technical School in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis possess the professional qualifications required for effective teaching of Core English Language. One can, therefore, conclude that the teachers have the skills, knowledge and competencies required to support the implementation of the core English Language curriculum using the fidelity approach.

The way the topics have been arranged in the syllabus could generally affect how faithfully teachers could implement the curriculum. In this study, there are so many topics teachers are supposed to cover before students' write their WASSCE. Teachers are not able to cover all these topics. Some of these topics are so broad, so more time is needed for their effective teaching and learning. English language teachers at Bompeh Senior High Technical School are selective when they are adopting instructional methods for their lessons. They usually choose methods that are easy to use to deliver their lessons to the disadvantage of students' thorough understanding and this in the long run would affect how faithfully these teachers implemented the curriculum. Even though majority of the English teachers in Bompeh Senior High Technical School had the syllabus and textbooks to help with the implementation of the curriculum, these materials were not enough. There is the need to have other materials which would help the students to understand the lessons better.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn, a number of recommendations have been made.

- Teachers should be encouraged and motivated by the stakeholders such as Ghana Education Service, Teacher Education Division, Government and Non-governmental organisations to enable them to undertake professional training to upgrade themselves. The teachers should take their responsibilities seriously by engaging in educational activities that could enhance their skills. These include, among others, strategic seminars, workshops, and team teaching. This will help to increase their knowledge in curriculum implementation. More training, pre-service and in-service-training should be given to teachers by the Ghana Education Service. This would help to solve the problem of inadequacy of skills and knowledge in specific subject area.
- The Curriculum Research and Development Division should review the content of the current Core English Language syllabus in consultation with teacher organizations and the teachers in the classrooms so as to make the content of the syllabus achievable within the duration of the Senior High School period. This should be done by

making the topics easy to follow and teach. Some of the topics taught in the Junior High Schools should not be repeated in the Senior High Schools so that it would be easier for the teachers to complete the syllabus and in the long run help in the easy implementation of the curriculum. The syllabus, the recommended textbooks and the requirements of examination bodies should all be considered so that they would all be in alignment.

- The government, Ministry of Education, and Ghana Education Service should make budgetary allocation for school to supplement the provision of teaching and learning resources and supply the schools with the appropriate teaching learning materials. Funds should be made available to school administration to enable them to procure the necessary instructional materials which will facilitate the implementation of the English Language curriculum.
- There is the need for adequate provision and supply of instructional resources to schools by the Ministry of Education for effective teaching and learning. It is suggested that English language teachers in general, and particularly those at Bompeh Senior High Technical School be trained to improvise some of the materials they need for teaching.

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